

SNAPSHOT

Special Issue

OFFICE OF WORK & FAMILY LIFE

DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES 3RD QUARTER 2007



OFFICE OF CHILD CARE ANNUAL REPORT

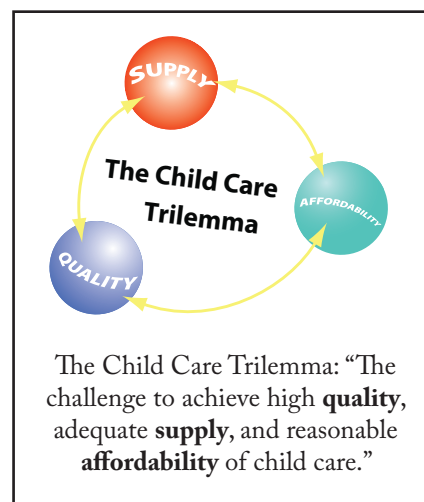
VISION: Quality, affordable child care is available to every child in Utah who needs it.

MISSION: To provide information, resources and support to help improve the economic stability and well being of Utah children and families.

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF CHILD CARE

The Office of Child Care (OCC) implements initiatives to assure children and families receive the supports they need within their own communities. Each OCC program integrates aspects of these common goals:

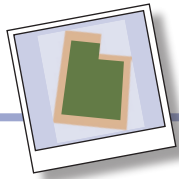
- To help our children grow up safe, healthy, and confident;
- To ensure our children in child care are engaged in developmentally appropriate activities;
- To ensure our children enter school ready to learn and succeed;
- To inform communities of their child care resources;
- To support families in becoming self-reliant and contributing to their community and state economy; and
- To maximize all available funding.



Why do we care about child care? One reason is that children have a scientifically-proven need for consistency and quality in their care-givers.¹ By spearheading efforts to improve child care in Utah, OCC helps create a brighter future for all Utahns.

Each year, the 3rd Quarter Snapshot is dedicated to the Office of Child Care Annual Report. In this issue, we'll peer through the viewfinder at the data, recapping the last 12 months, and also take a look at what's being done right now to help Utah's children develop successfully.

¹Dr. Bruce Perry, *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog*, Basic Books, 2006



Affordability

Child Care Subsidy

During the past year, the child care subsidy rate was increased to the market rate 75th percentile following significant efforts on the part of DWS and after receiving appropriate funding from the State Legislature. Additionally, the child care provider website (jobs.utah.gov/jsp/childcareprovider) was implemented, allowing providers access to useful information regarding their customers' Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) payments.

RC → EBT

To streamline the subsidy payment process, parents no longer receive two party checks to pay RC providers. Effective October 1, 2007, all RC providers have the advantage of using EBT to receive child care subsidies. The subsidy is transferred by the parent to the direct deposit account that the provider sets up with eFunds Government Solutions.



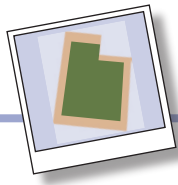
This year, three more important initiatives are in the works:

- Transitioning Residentially Certified (RC) providers to the EBT system
- Freezing the child care income table
- Creating a two-tiered child care eligibility system

FREEZING THE INCOME TABLE

Each year, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates the median income for states, based on the most recent data. In preparing the estimates for FFY 2008, the Bureau revised its methodology, choosing to use direct estimates derived from the American Community Survey instead of using the model-based estimates of previous years. As a result, the average state median income decreased nationally by 0.8 percent. For Utah, that meant that the state median income for a household of three decreased \$4,397, from \$53,116 in 2007 to \$48,719 in 2008. The result of that was that approximately 121 families or 250 children would lose their child care subsidy.

OCC developed a proposal to freeze the income tables used to determine child care subsidy eligibility for at least 12 months, and reevaluate in the Spring of 2009, when new data is released. The proposal has been accepted, thus preventing a change in calculation methodology from inadvertently hurting Utah families.

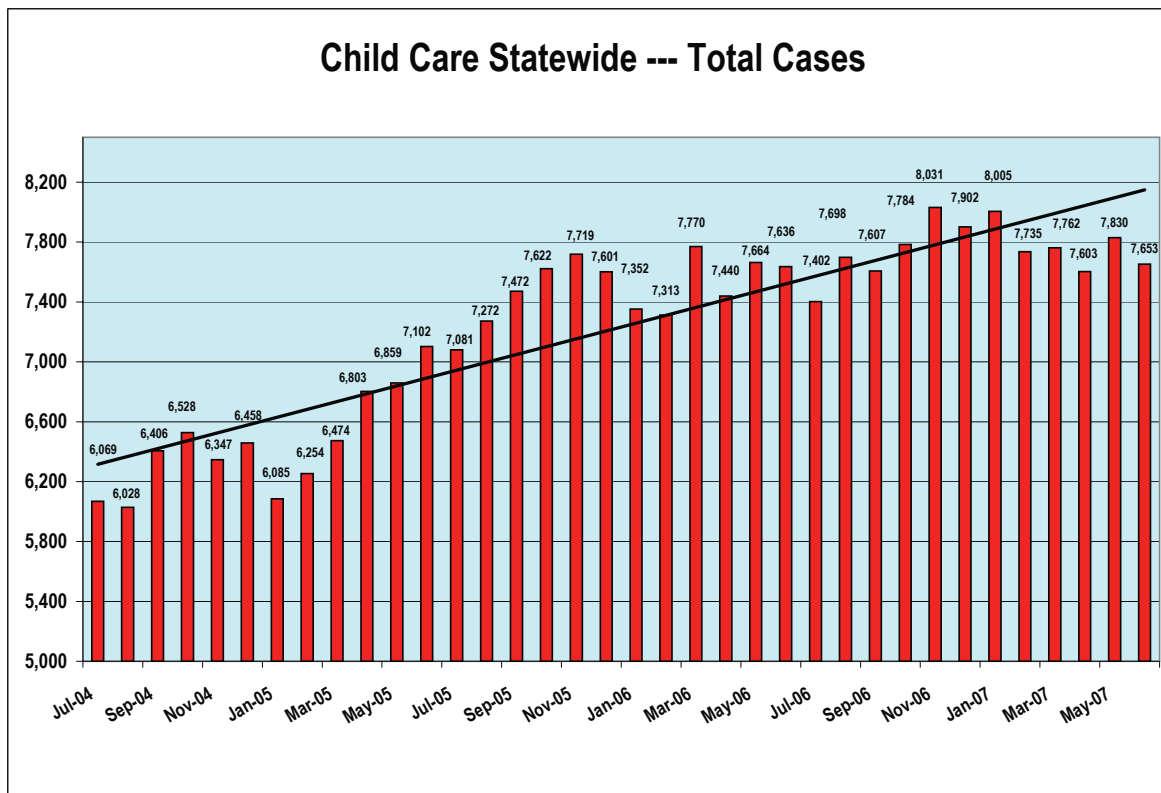


TWO-TIERED ELIGIBILITY

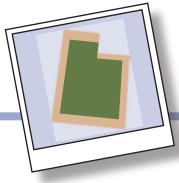
In Utah, a single income eligibility threshold is used to determine whether a family may receive child care assistance. Evidence suggests that this creates a “cliff effect,” where some employees will reject a pay raise that jeopardizes their child care subsidy. At the request of the Legislature, the Department is researching a two-tier child care eligibility system. This system would allow Utah to use a lower income limit when making eligibility determinations for families first seeking child care subsidies, and applying a higher income threshold, as families’ eligibility is periodically re-determined. The two-tier eligibility strategy would allow families to retain child care assistance while experiencing modest success in the job market, rather than being penalized for making strides in their employment. The research is under review by the State Legislature.



Importance of Subsidy in Making Child Care Affordable



The DWS child care subsidy caseload continues to grow, increasing by about 25 percent over the last three years.



QUALITY

OCC continues to move forward with quality initiatives by funding grants that help providers step up to a higher level of quality in child care, as well as funding the Child Care Professional Development Institute (CCPDI), where providers can learn the skills they need.

Afterschool

- In the past year Youth Connections grantees met or exceeded the program quality requirement of at least a Level 4 on the School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS).
- During the year, 13 programs gained an average of 0.54 levels on SACERS to be successful, and by year end all programs averaged 4.65. Interestingly, those programs participating for a second round of Youth Connections grants (year 4 in the program) averaged a 5.20 level on SACERS.

Afterschool Advantages

Children who attend high quality after-school programs have better conflict resolution skills, emotional adjustment, peer relations, grades and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in afterschool programs. They also spend more time in learning opportunities, academic activities, and enrichment activities and spend less time watching television than their peers.

National Institute of Out-of-School Time, 2005

Infant/Toddler Care

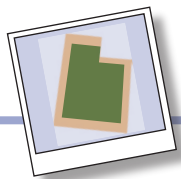
Baby Steps grant:

- 66 child care centers participated, serving 1,100 infants and toddlers
- Observations and monitoring indicate significant improvements in the quality of care provided
- Baby Steps program staff participated in more than 5,000 hours of specialized training

CCPDI

During the past year, **63,187** hours of low cost training were accessed by child care providers to enhance their professional development and program quality. That's the equivalent of more than **30** years of 40-hour workweeks.





SUPPLY

Grants originating from OCC also help fund the creation of programs or add child care spaces to existing child care facilities. Utah's six Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&R) help parents find a quality place for the care of their children.

Afterschool

- 53 programs funded by Youth Connections grants
- 12 programs funded by the Kindergarten Match program
- About 8,400 children served



Infant/Toddler Care

First Steps Grant supported the creation of a total of 120 spaces:

- Created 88 new spaces equipped to provide above a minimal level of care
- Upgraded another 32 spaces (created before the grant opened); providing the resources to provide higher quality care
- New spaces were created in both rural areas and along the Wasatch Front
- The spaces of one grantee in downtown Salt Lake were filled in ½ hour

The need for infant and toddler child care remains critical:

- 45% of all requests for child care at the CCR&Rs are for infant/toddler age children; often there are no spaces for these children
- DWS Needs Assessment data consistently shows need for Infant/Toddler spaces across the state

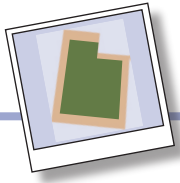
CCR&R

Increase in CCR&R Parent Referrals:

Child Care Resource and Referral	FY07 Referrals
Bridgerland	1,456
Northern	3,534
Metro	22,998
Mountainland	2,079
Eastern	346
Western	1,382
Total	31,795

This year saw a 25 percent increase over last year's total of 25,430 referrals.

This year's total of 31,795 referrals equates to more than 611 referrals per week.

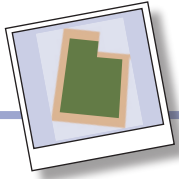


PARTNERSHIPS

- The 5th Annual CCPDI conference in September 2007 hosted a special guest as keynote speaker. Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D., who was featured in the *Ten Things Every Child Needs* video, is the Senior Fellow of *The Child-Trauma Academy*. For the past fifteen years, Dr. Perry has been a teacher, clinician, and researcher in the field of children's mental health. His work has been instrumental in describing how childhood experiences, including neglect and traumatic stress, change the biology of the brain – and, thereby, the health of the child. His efforts have helped develop innovative treatments to assist children with recovery and healing. His insights and instruction were much appreciated at the CCPDI Conference.



- Policy Matters is a project started by Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan of Teachers College at Columbia University in New York. In Utah, the Policy Matters project is sponsored by Voices for Utah Children, which received a grant to conduct the project, with matching funds from the Office of Child Care and the Department of Health. Through a 12-month process, teams (including OCC staff) will conduct a statewide policy audit of all state agencies, looking at the following domains:
 - ‡ Quality Early Care and Education Settings
 - ‡ Early Childhood Education Professional and Workforce Development
 - ‡ Informed Families, Informed Public
 - ‡ Accountability/Results Orientation
 - ‡ Adequate Early Childhood Education Financing
 - ‡ Governance and Coordination

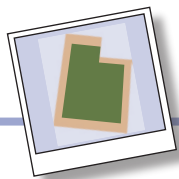


- Utah received a National Governors Association Grant, which is being used to fund a Governor's Summit on Early Childhood in Utah, which will focus on interagency collaboration and coordination of services. Long-term goals of this summit include securing legislative support and funding for early childhood initiatives.



- On June 5, 2007, Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., constituted the Governor's Child and Family Cabinet Council. The main function of the new Council is to develop policies, inventory funding streams and track child and family well-being and outcomes. One of the areas of focus is early childhood education. In July, Lynette Rasmussen, director of the Office of Child Care, presented before the Council. Key elements of that presentation included:
 - The Early Development Issue: A child's intellectual, emotional, social and moral development is primarily shaped by experiences and education between birth and age six.
 - The Need for Care Issue: For economic reasons, a very large number of mothers have to work and require affordable, high-quality child care.

Look for additional details in a future issue of *Snapshot*.



Resources

The 2007 Utah Child Care Needs Assessment – Online at: <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/occ/occ2/learnmore/other/2007needsassessmentdraft.pdf>

What is Quality Care? – Online at: <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/occ/occ2/learnmore/other/qualitycare.pdf>

Kindergarten, Here We Come! – Online at: <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/occ/occ2/learnmore/other/kindergarten.pdf>

Electronic version of this Snapshot – Online at: <http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/occ/occ2/learnmore/snapshot/2007q3.pdf>

Contact: Lynette Rasmussen
Director, Office of Work & Family Life, Office of Child Care
801.526.4340
lrasmussen@utah.gov

SNAPSHOT

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DWS Executive Director: Kristen Cox; Office of Work & Family Life Director: Lynette Rasmussen
Snapshot Writer/Editor: Michael Britton; Design: Winston Inoway

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Office of Work & Family Life
Department of Workforce Services
140 East 300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84111